

PINE MOUNTAIN TRAIL STATE PARK

Trail Guide
and Maps

Birch Knob Section

Trail Distance of 26.4 Miles

parks.ky.gov
pinemountaintrail.com



Revision 2008/01/14

PINE MOUNTAIN TRAIL STATE PARK: Birch Knob Section

About Pine Mountain Trail State Park

To promote, construct, and manage a continuous hiking trail, with related spur, connector, and access trails, to be called the Pine Mountain Trail, and to conserve the natural environment of the Trail and its adjacent lands. The Trail shall run from the Breaks Interstate Park to Cumberland Gap National Historical Park, along the Pine Mountain ridge over the summits and through the scenic points of interest, so as to render the mountain accessible, principally for primitive camping, backpacking, and hiking. The Trail shall be a means for showcasing the wild highlands and conserving the natural and cultural heritage of Appalachia for future generations.

Pine Mountain offers a wide array of recreational opportunities. We encourage you to head out on the trail and experience the beauty of Pine Mountain for yourself.

Pine Mountain represents one of the last great contiguous stretches of unfragmented forest in Kentucky. While other parts of the region have been developed, strip-mined or heavily logged, Pine Mountain remains relatively untouched. Positioned at the western edge of the Appalachian Mountains, the mountain offers commanding views of Virginia, Kentucky, West Virginia and Tennessee. If ever there was a hope of preserving an ecological legacy for future generations of Kentuckians, this is it. The mountain has remained a refuge in the face of increasing human intrusion, mainly because it is a rugged, nearly roadless mountain that is guarded by jutting sandstone cliffs, tangled rhododendron thickets and large, pre-historic land slides laden with car-sized boulders. Even when deer and turkey were driven out of most of the region, Pine Mountain remained a refuge for wildlife native to the area.

Today the mountain serves as the travel corridor for black bear re-entering the state from Virginia and Tennessee. It provides habitat for the newly restored elk, and is the home of many Kentucky species that are restricted to Pine Mountain (i.e. rose pogonia, frostweed and the largest known population of yellow wild indigo in the Commonwealth). Breached by only six roads in 110 miles, the mountain represents a significant unprotected wilderness area.

TRAIL REGULATIONS

Trail users assume all risks in the natural areas. Be prepared.

Help preserve the park's natural resources. The following activities are prohibited:

- Carving or damaging rock formations and trees
- Hunting or disturbing wildlife
- Collecting or digging for artifacts
- Picking flowers or harming plants
- Alcoholic beverages
- Unleashed pets
- Littering
- Motorized vehicles, biking, and horseback riding
- Any activity off designated park trails
- Rappelling and rockclimbing
- Hiking after dark

For Your Safety:

Do not hike alone.

Wear proper clothing and footwear.

Take a park map.

About the Birch Knob Section

The Birch Knob Section, named after the highest point on this section of trail, runs from the trailhead in Elkhorn City to the trailhead on US 23. It is 25.2 miles long and traverses both high dry ridgeline and wet upland bogs, most of which are re-naturalized homesteads from the 1800's. There are numerous cliff-line views offering views deep into Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, and on clear days, Tennessee and Ohio. At Birch Knob, there is a massive metal staircase with a large viewing platform which provides the best views on this section.

Drive Time

- From Middlesboro, KY - 2 hours
- From Corbin, KY - 2 hours 15 minutes
- From Lexington, KY - 3 hours
- From Pikeville, KY - 40 minutes
- From Whitesburg, KY - 20 minutes
- From Wise, VA - 20 minutes
- From Abingdon, VA - 1 hour 20 minutes
- From Johnson City, TN - 1 hour 35 minutes
- From Tazewell, TN - 2 hours 10 minutes
- From Knoxville, TN - 2 hours 45 minutes

Shuttle Pickup

See the Pine Mountain Trail Conference website (<http://www.pinemountaintrail.com>) for more information on pickup times.

Hiking Time and Distance

Allow to average 2-3 miles per hour on this section, as there are many ups and downs along the sawtooth-type ridgeline. It is 14.7 miles from Elkhorn City to Mullins Pond. From Mullins Pond to US 23 is 11.7 miles.

Precautions

There are many side roads which can easily be mistaken for the trail route. Carefully observe the yellow blazes and do not go more than 400 yards if you have not seen one. Camping should be avoided at Mullins Pond due to the road access. Black bears are common on this section, so care should be taken to avoid cooking at the tent site and all foods and other scented items should be bear bagged. In any back-woods setting, snakes and yellow-jackets are common. Pay attention to your footing around cliff areas, especially during wet or icy weather. The sandstone becomes very slick.

Points of Interest

Elkhorn City Overlook	Mullins Pond
Skegg Overlook	Grassy Gap
Goldfish Pond	Cantrell Gap
Skeet Rock Knob	Big Lick Gap
Natural Bridge Ledge	Osburn Gap
Big Toe Site Rock	The Doubles
Blowing Rock Gap	Cable Gap
Dutton Bottom	Bryant Gap
Jenny Falls	Tucker Gap
Birch Knob Observation Tower	Austin Gap

PINE MOUNTAIN TRAIL STATE PARK: Birch Knob Section

Driving Directions to the Birch Knob Section

FROM I-75 / LEXINGTON, KY:

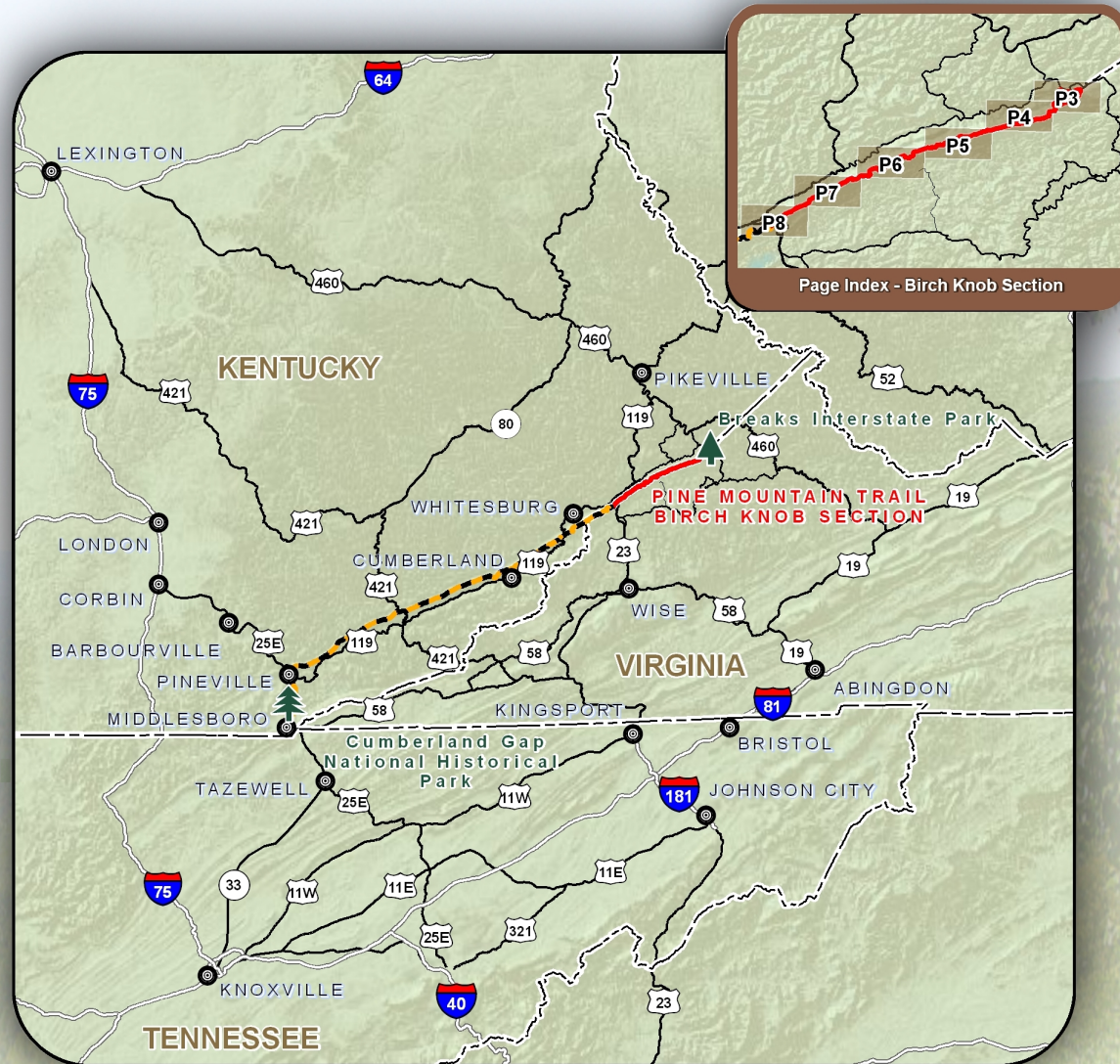
Take exit 111 onto I-64 E Winchester/Ashland
Take exit 98 onto Mountain Pkwy E Prestonsburg/Campton
Continue on KY-114 and take ramp onto US-23/US-460
Slight right at KY-80/S Mayo Trail/US-460
Stay on KY-80
Turn right at Carson Island Rd

FROM I-77 / I-64 / CHARLESTON, WV:

From I-64, take exit 58A for US-119 S Logan/Oakwood Rd
Merge onto US-119/WV-214
Take ramp onto US-119
Turn left at KY-80/N Mayo Trail/US-23/US-460
Continue to follow KY-80/US-23/US-460
Slight right at KY-80/S Mayo Trail/US-460
Stay on KY-80
Turn right at Carson Island Rd

FROM I-81:

From I-81, take exit 24 for VA-80 toward Meadowview
Turn right at VA-80
Continue to follow VA-80 / KY-80
Turn left at Carson Island Rd



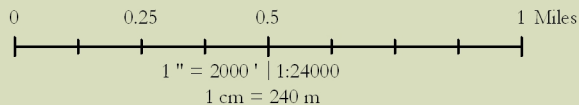


Pine Mountain Trail

State Park

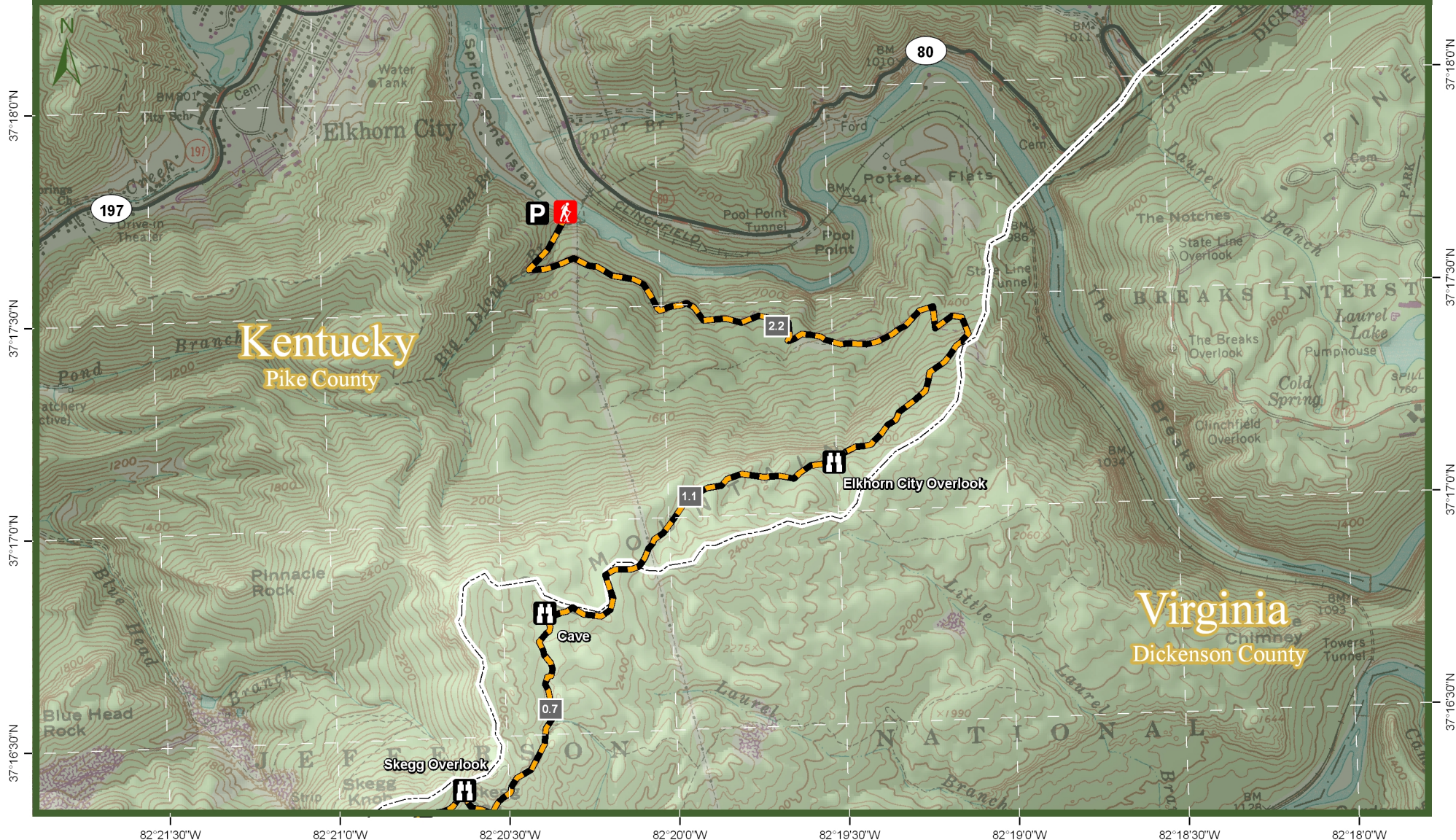
Birch Knob Section P3

Sources: Kentucky Division of Geographic Information,
Kentucky Department of Parks, Pine Mountain
Trail Conference



- Trailhead
- Parking
- Campground
- Shelter
- Points of Interest
- Water Source
- Pine Mountain Trail
- Alternate Trail
- State Line
- County Line
- US Roads
- State Roads
- Local Roads
- Railroads
- Trail Distances Shown In Miles

P4

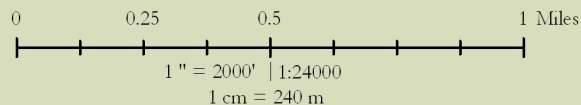




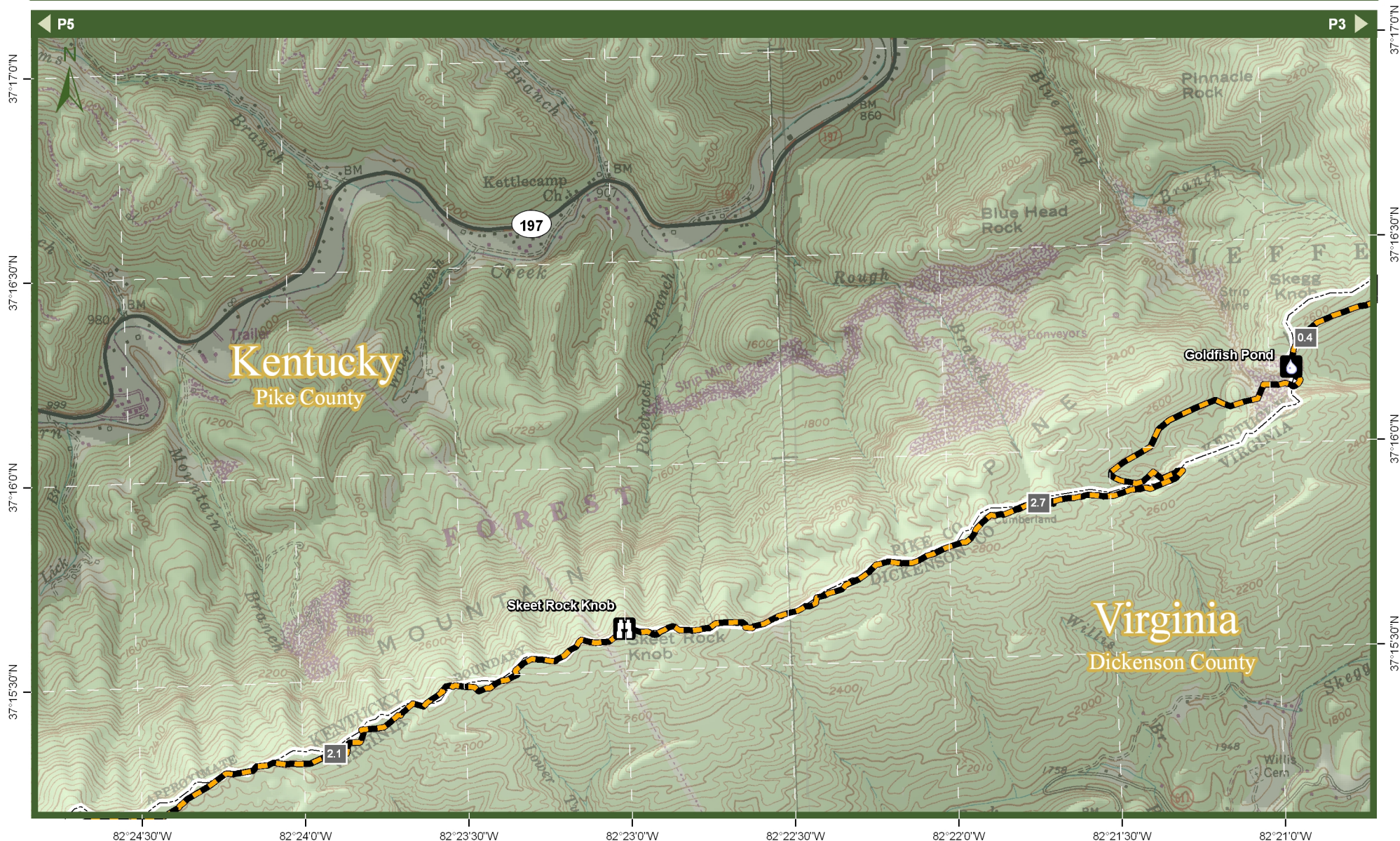
Pine Mountain Trail State Park

Birch Knob Section P4

Sources: Kentucky Division of Geographic Information,
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- Trailhead
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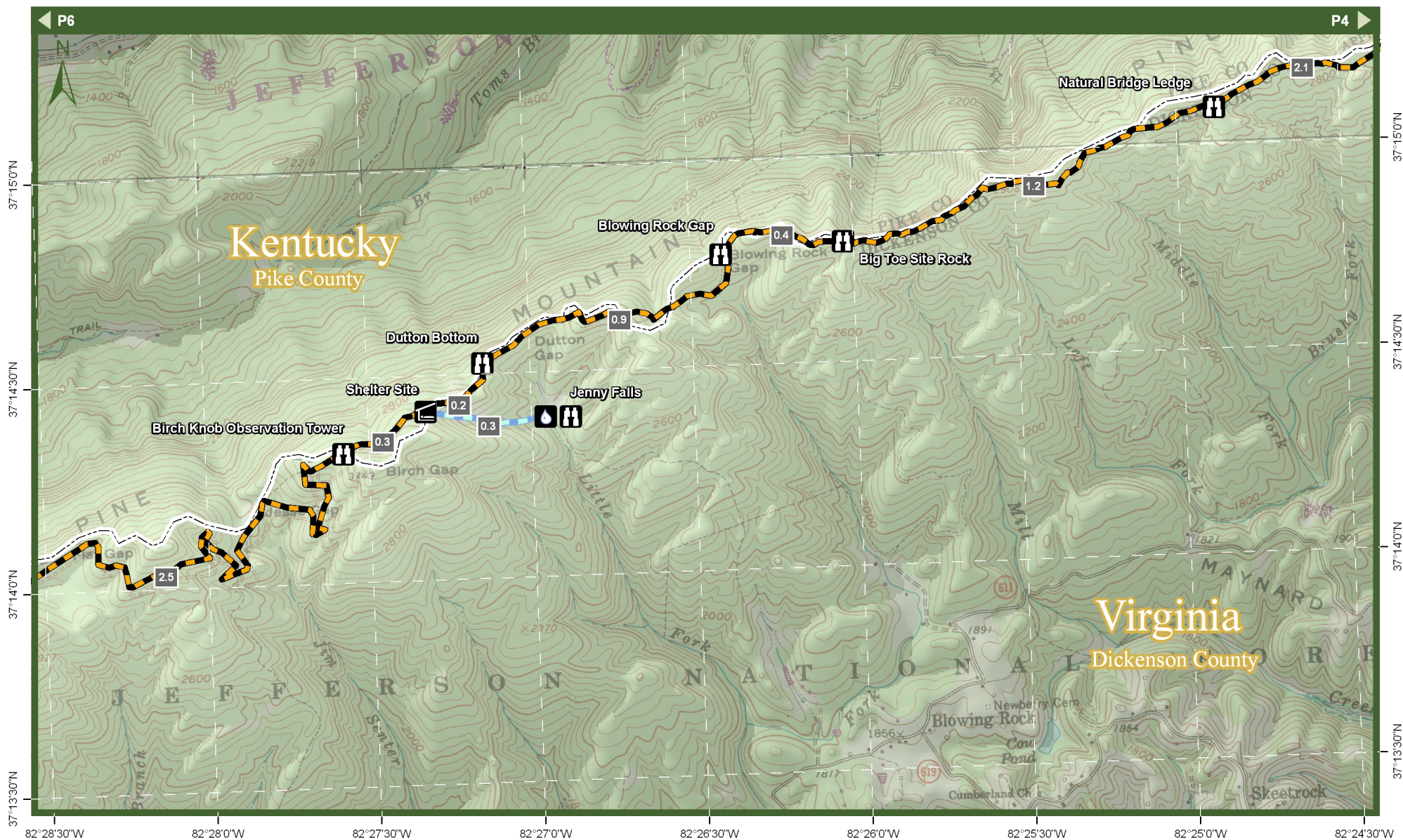
Birch Knob Section P5

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

1" = 2000' | 1:24000

1 cm = 240 m

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|  | Trailhead |  | Pine Mountain Trail |
|  | Parking |  | Alternate Trail |
|  | Campground |  | State Line |
|  | Shelter |  | County Line |
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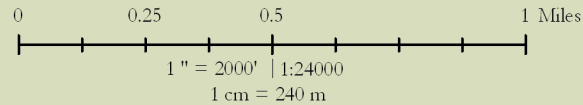




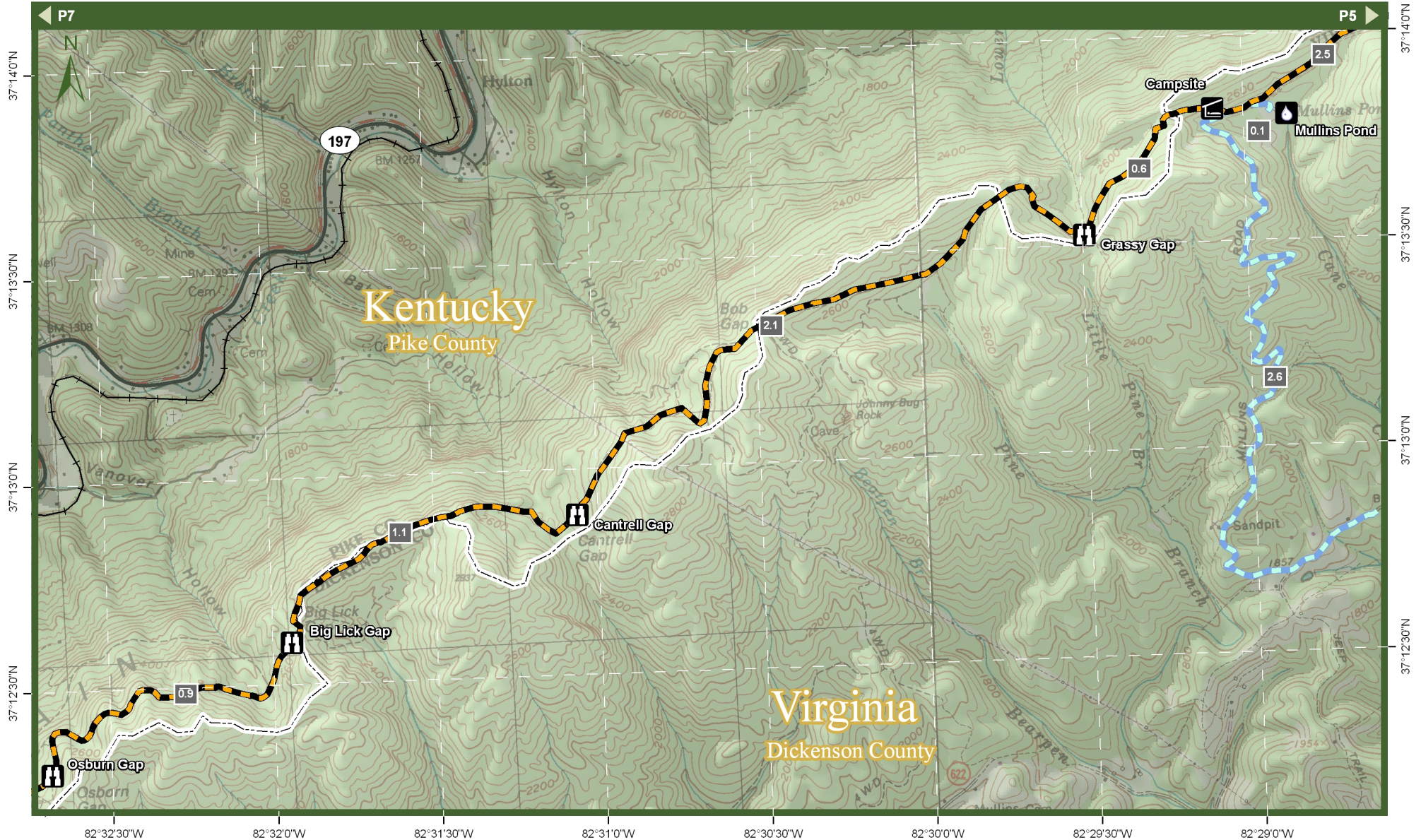
Pine Mountain Trail State Park

Birch Knob Section P6

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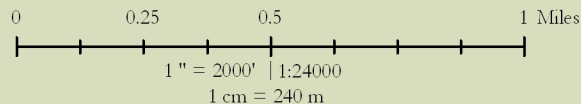
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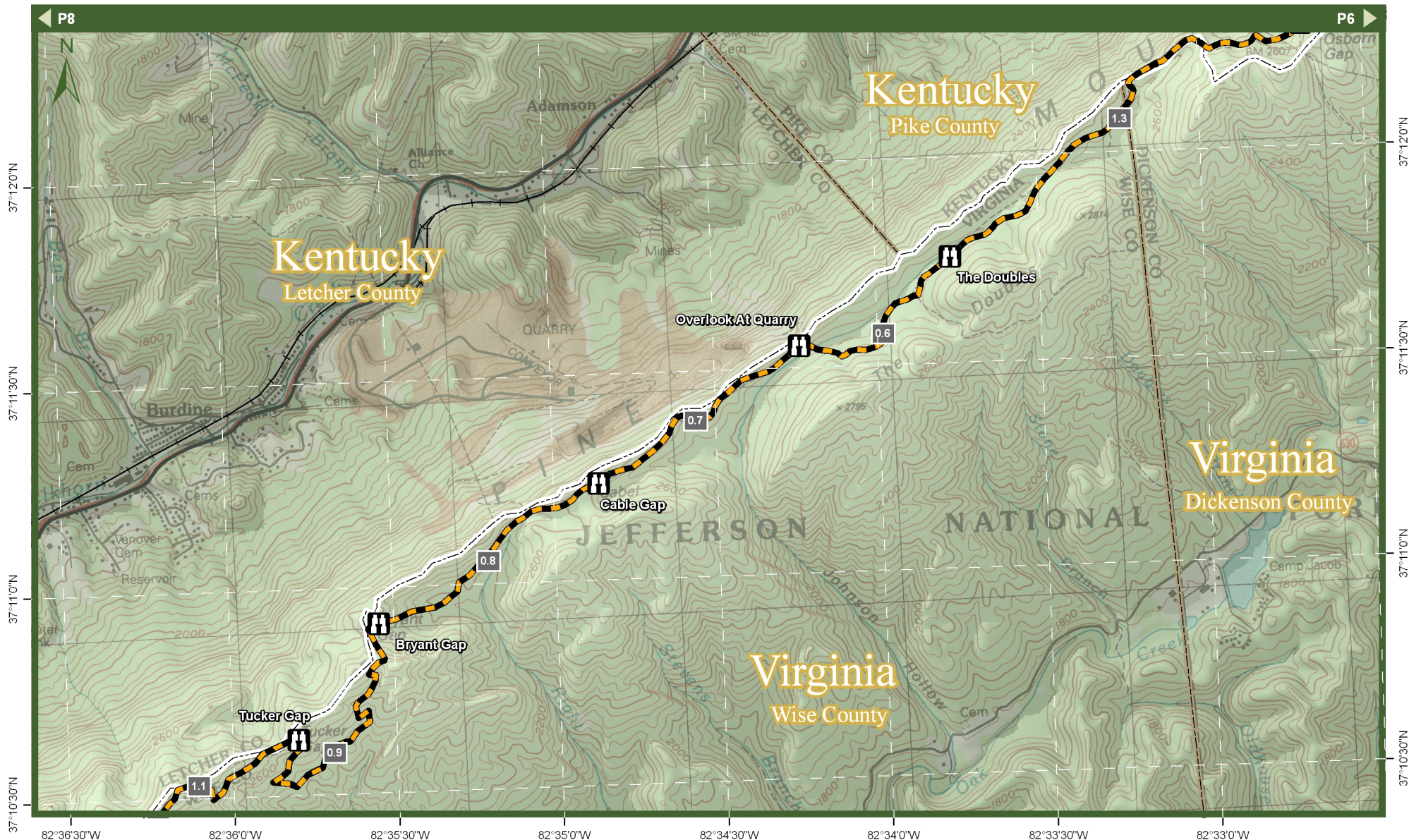
Pine Mountain Trail State Park

Birch Knob Section P7



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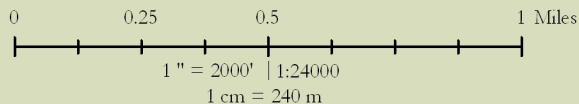


Pine Mountain Trail

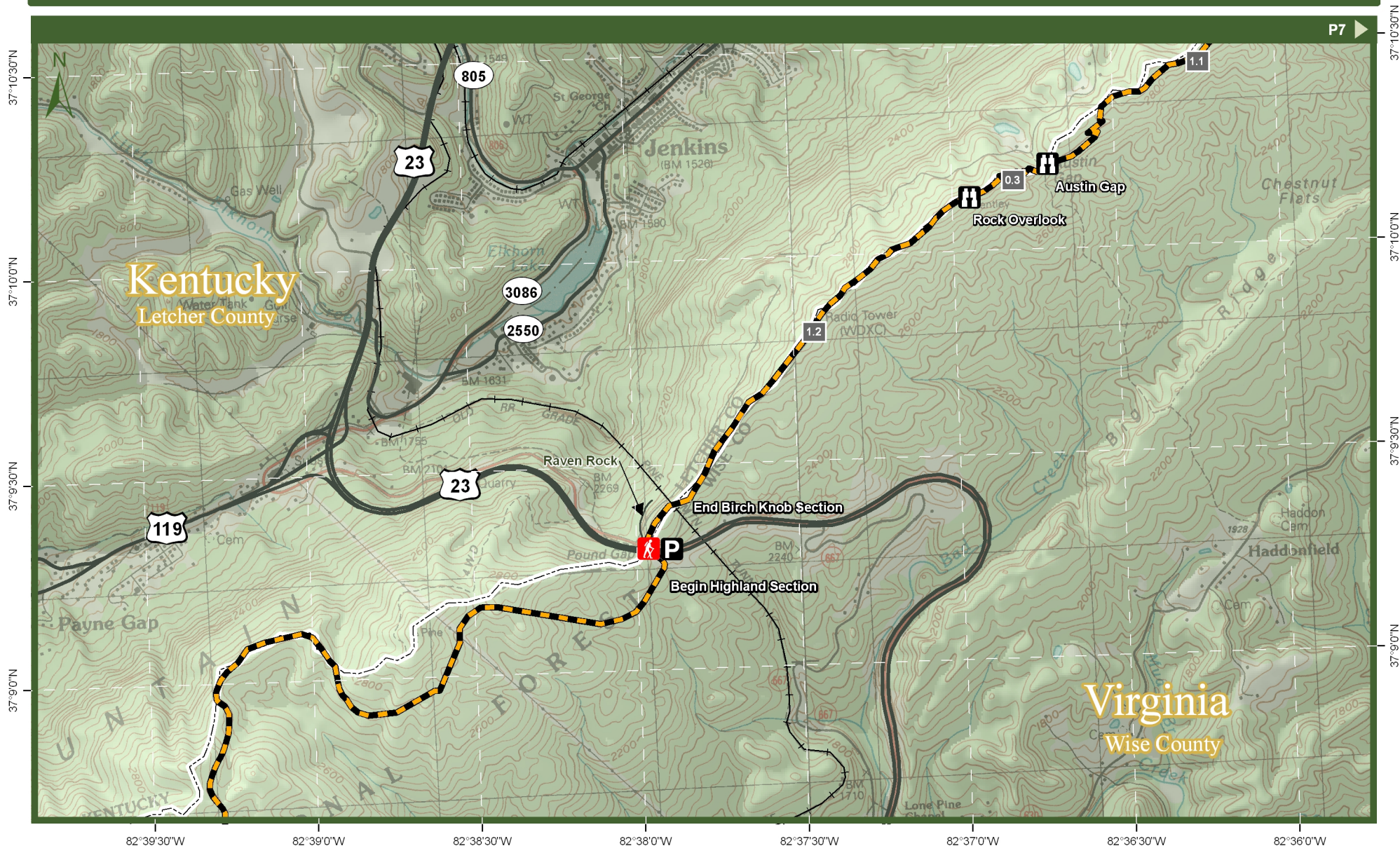
State Park

Birch Knob Section P8

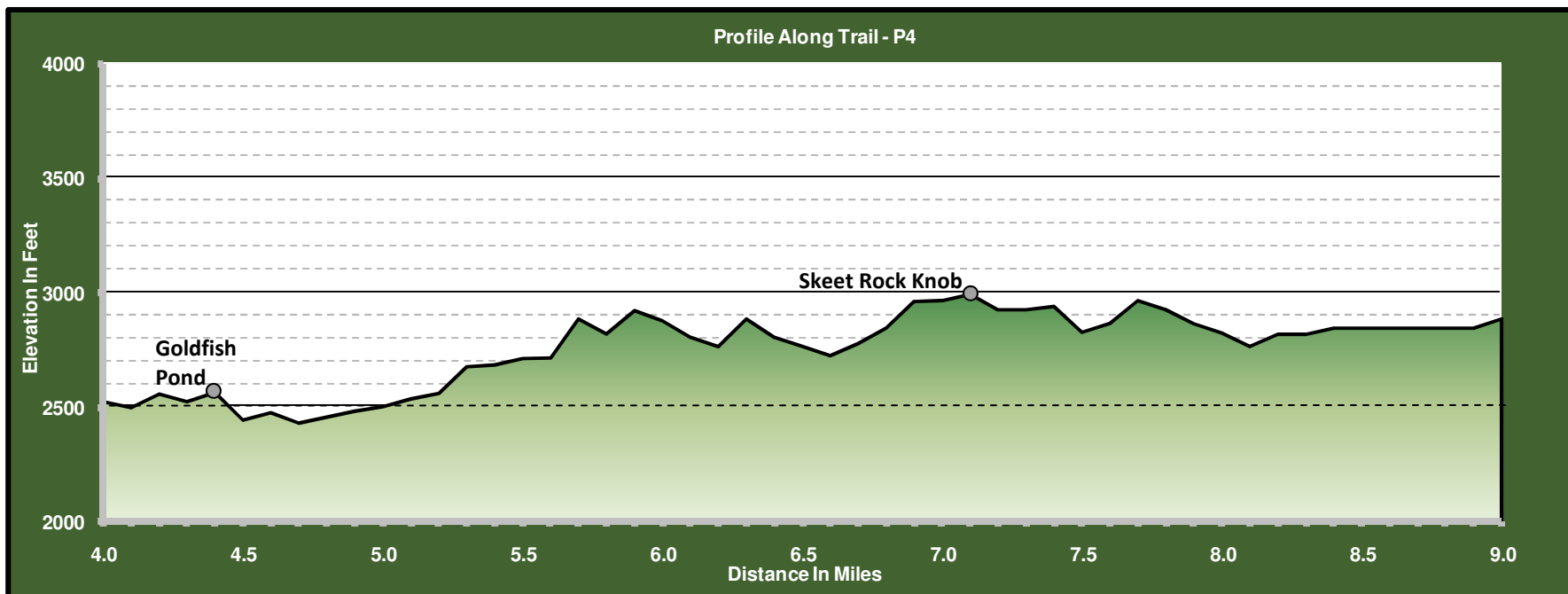
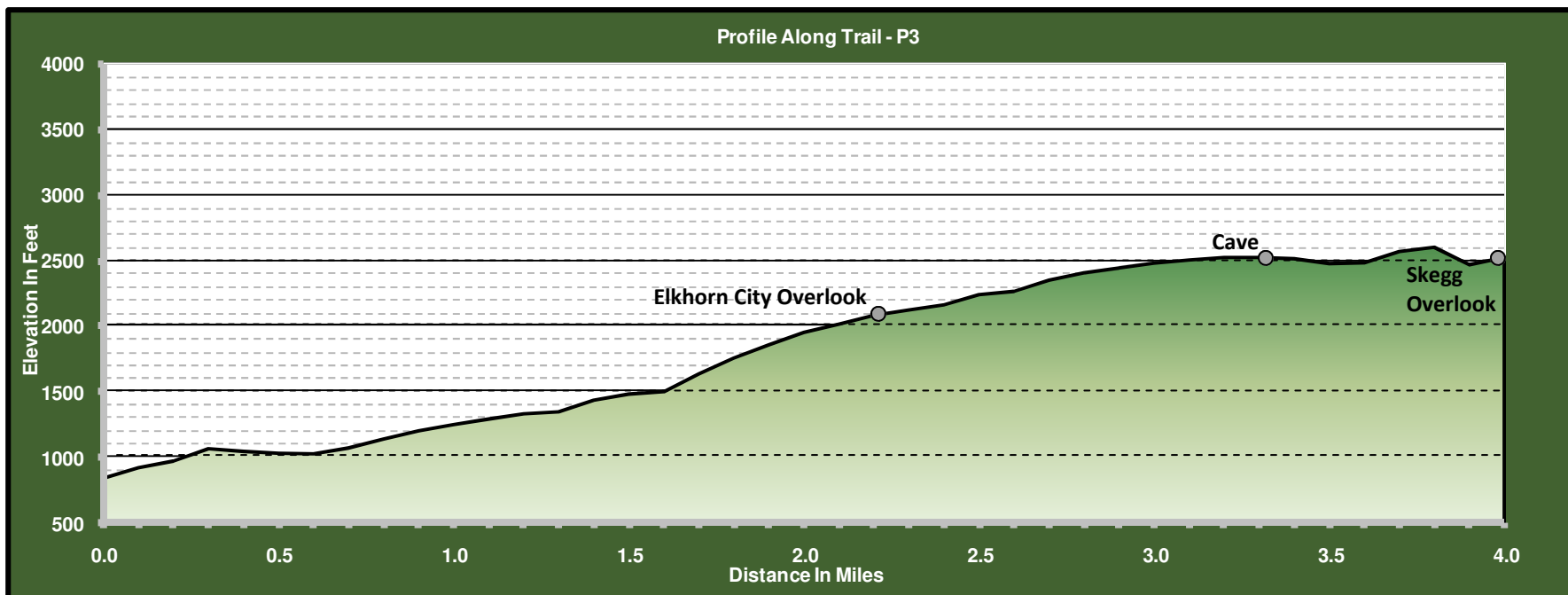
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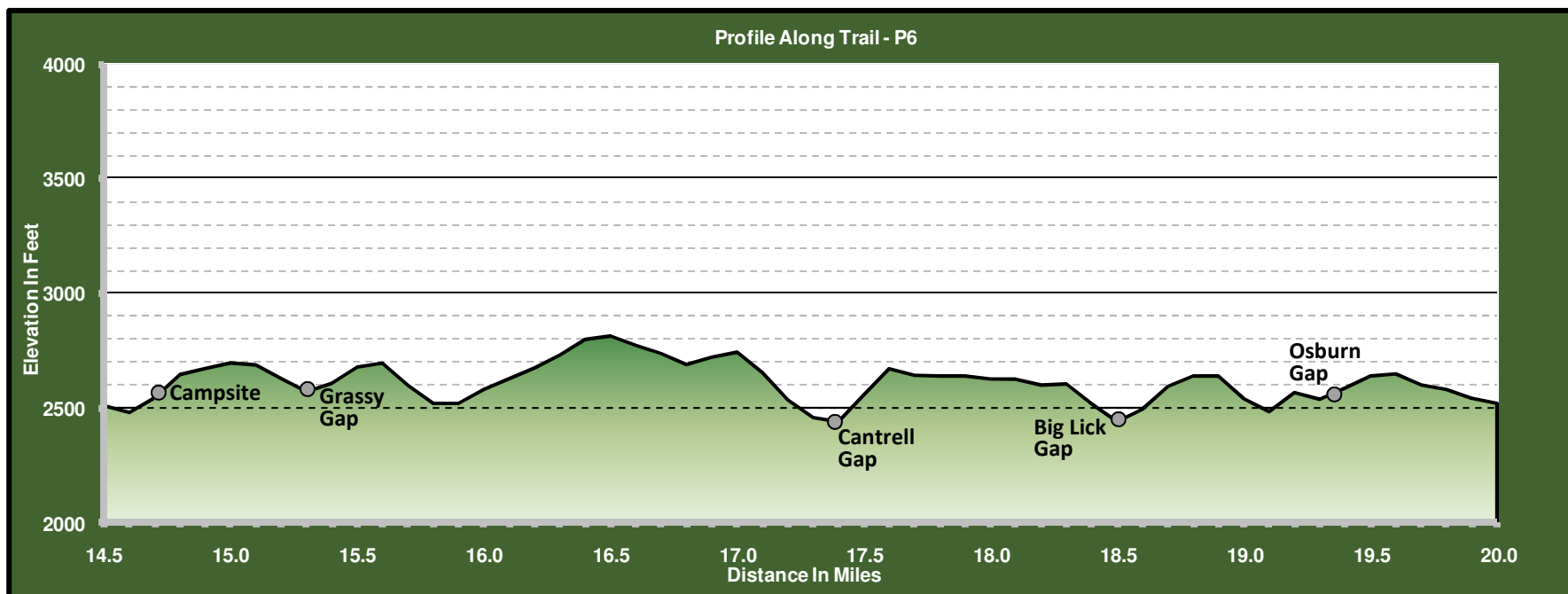
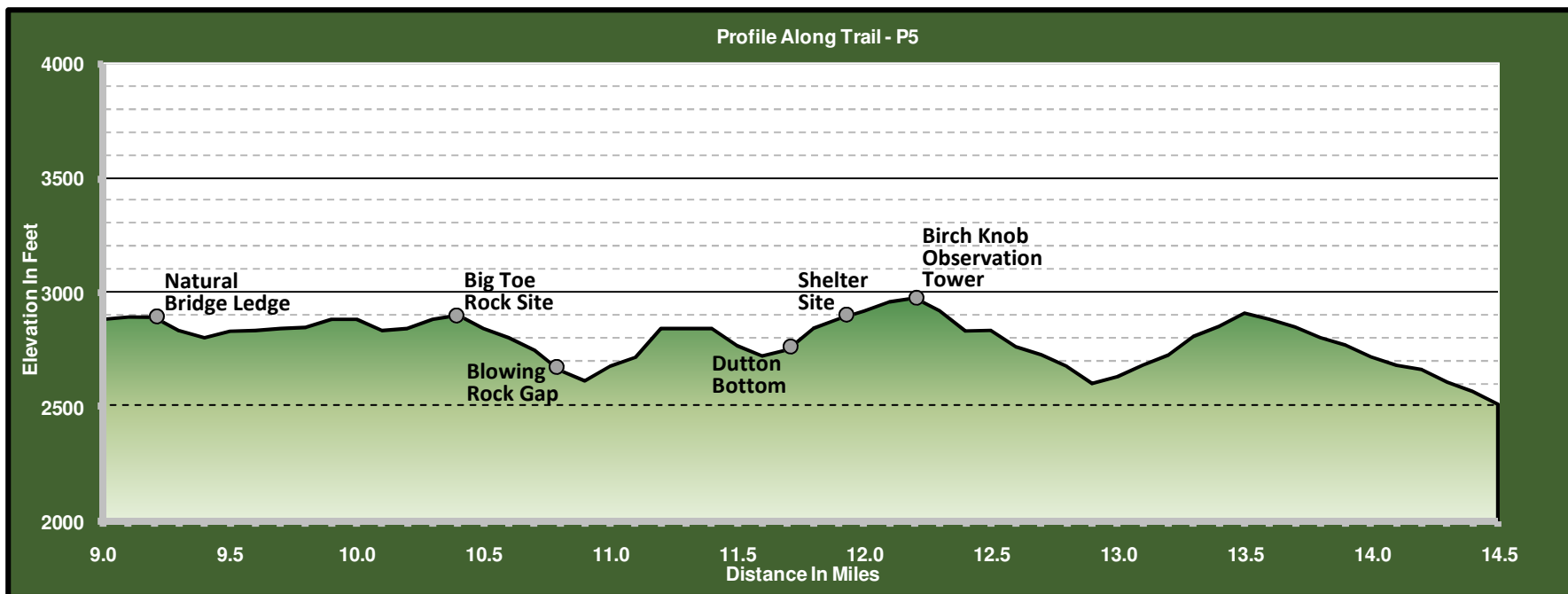
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